

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-02 INR-07
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-15 EB-08 COME-00 TRSE-00 OPIC-06 AID-05
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R 171053Z AUG 77
FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5239
INFO AMEMBASSY JAKARTA
AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR
AMEMBASSY MANILA
AMEMBASSY RANGOON
AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE
AMEMBASSY TOKYO

UNCLAS BANGKOK 18198

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PDIP, TH, JA
SUBJECT: FUKUDA VISIT TO BANGKOK

SUMMARY: PRELIMINARY PRESS ACCOUNTS OF JAPANESE PRIME MINISTER FUKUDA'S VISIT TO BANGKOK AUG. 15-17 INDICATE THAT THE THAI HOPE TO DOUBLE THE \$100 MILLION JAPANESE LOAN ALREADY OFFERED TO THAILAND FOR THE FOURTH THAI FIVE-YEAR PLAN, IN THE COURSE OF PRIME MINISTER THANIN'S FORTHCOMING VISIT TO JAPAN. ALSO CONCERNED ABOUT THE DEFICIT IN THE THAI TRADE ACCOUNT WITH JAPAN, THE THAI REPORTEDLY URGED INCREASED JAPANESE IMPORTS OF THAI GOODS, PARTICULARLY AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS. VISIT RECEIVED EXTENSIVE PRESS COVERAGE AND WAS REPORTEDLY VERY CORDIAL. ADDITIONAL REPORTING WILL FOLLOW IN NEXT FEW DAYS WHEN THAI OFFICIALS ARE AVAILABLE TO DISCUSS VISIT. END SUMMARY.

1. DURING AUGUST 15-17 VISIT TO BANGKOK JAPANESE
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PRIME MINISTER FUKUDA, ACCOMPANIED BY PARTY OF OVER 100, INCLUDING WHAT LOCAL PRESS CALLED "SMALL ARMY" OF NEWSMEN, ANNOUNCED U.S. \$100 MILLION CONCESSIONAL LOAN FOR THAILAND'S FOURTH FIVE-YEAR PLAN. ACCORDING TO PRESS REPORTS, PRIME MINISTER THANIN WAS NOT TOTALLY SATISFIED WITH THE AMOUNT AND INTENDS TO DISCUSS DOUBLING THAT FIGURE DURING HIS PROPOSED VISIT

TO JAPAN SEPTEMBER 7-11. PRESS DREW UNFAVORABLE COMPARISON OF REPORTED JAPANESE LOANS OF \$175 MILLION FOR INDONESIA AND \$130 MILLION FOR BURMA TO AMOUNT OFFERED THAILAND. ADDITIONAL ASSISTANCE GIVEN BY JAPANESE GOVERNMENT INCLUDED AGREEMENT TO BUILD \$3.85 MILLION INSTITUTE FOR DEVELOPING SKILLS IN KHON KAEN IN NORTHEAST THAILAND. IN OFFICIAL COMMUNIQUE ISSUED BY JAPANESE, JAPANESE GOVERNMENT WAS ALSO SAID TO BE STUDYING GRANT OF U.S. \$3.32 MILLION TO HELP INCREASE FOOD PRODUCTION.

2. PRESS ALSO REPORTED THAT THAI EXPRESSED CONCERN OVER TRADE IMBALANCE WITH JAPAN, THAILAND'S LARGEST TRADING PARTNER. ACCORDING TO JAPANESE STATISTICS, THAILAND SUFFERED A 222 MILLION DOLLAR TRADE DEFICIT IN 1976, AND NEWS THAT JAPAN'S JULY TRADE SURPLUS HAD BEEN ANNOUNCED IN TOKYO AS BEING U.S. \$1,510 MILLION DID NOT MAKE JAPAN'S EXPLANATION FOR FAILURE TO INCREASE IMPORTS OF THAI GOODS ANY EASIER FOR THAI TO SWALLOW. FOREIGN MINISTER UPPADIT TOLD PRESS HE HAD BROUGHT UP FACT THAT OF 56 AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS WHICH JAPAN HAD AGREED TO PURCHASE LAST YEAR FROM THAILAND, ONLY 17 HAD BEEN IMPORTED. UPPADIT SAID JAPANESE HAD EXPLAINED THAT JAPAN IS CONCERNED ABOUT THE PLIGHT OF ITS OWN FARMERS, AND MANY OF THE 39 REMAINING PRODUCTS HAD NOT MET JAPANESE HEALTH STANDARDS, BUT UNCLASSIFIED

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JAPAN HAD AGREED TO ENCOURAGE INCREASED IMPORTS IN FUTURE.

3. PRESS REPORTS SAID THAT PRIME MINISTER THANIN HAD ALSO DISCUSSED THAI SECURITY SITUATION WITH JAPANESE AND EXPRESSED CONCERN ABOUT JAPANESE ASSISTANCE TO INDOCHINA, ALTHOUGH DETAILS OF DISCUSSION WERE NOT MADE PUBLIC. IN DEPARTURE PRESS CONFERENCE FUKUDA REPORTEDLY STATED THAT JAPAN WISHES TO IMPROVE RELATIONS WITH INDOCHINA COUNTRIES BUT WOULD NOT. AS APPARENTLY RUMORED, DROP DEBT CLAIMS AGAINST SRV. FUKUDA ALSO REPORTEDLY TOLD PRESS THAT HE HAD BEEN ASSURED BY PRIME MINISTER THANIN ABOUT RECENT CONTROVERSY OVER PURCHASE OF TELEPHONE EQUIPMENT FROM JAPANESE BUSINESS FIRMS. FUKUDA SAID THANIN HAD CALLED THE MATTER A QUESTION OF DISCIPLINE OF GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS; ALL MINISTERS HAD BEEN THOROUGHLY SCREENED, AND THANIN WAS CONFIDENT NO CORRUPTION WAS INVOLVED IN THE CONTRACT.

4. FUKUDA VISIT WAS WIDELY PUBLICIZED, AND ACCORDING TO PRESS, JAPANESE WERE WARMLY RECEIVED.

SEPARATE REPORT WILL BE SUBMITTED WHEN EMBASSY
HAS OPPORTUNITY TO DISCUSS VISIT WITH THAI AND
JAPANESE EMBASSY OFFICIALS.
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